



The Heart of Strategy
**Rethinking Punishment Strategies through an Emotion-Centric
Perspective**

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Master's Thesis, 30 ECTS

War Studies

Master's Programme in War and Defence

Autumn 2024

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Word count: 16522

Abstract

Although civilians should be protected in armed conflict, they are also deliberately targeted for strategic gain. Punishment strategies are often conceptualized as calculative tools that harm civilians to coerce the adversary. This understanding reflects an inherent assumption that actors behave rationally in conflict. However, this view has limitations because rationality is seen as the opposite of emotion and cannot fully capture the dynamics of punishment strategies, as no human endeavor is devoid of emotions. By questioning the rational assumptions of strategy and investigating them from an emotion-centric perspective, this study aims to understand how emotions relate to different types of punishment. The thesis develops a *Punishment Typology* with four distinct types of punishment: *deterrent*, *demoralizing*, *preemptive*, and *vengeful punishment*, illustrated by case studies. The theoretical contribution also specifies how deterrent and demoralizing punishments are *coercive strategies* intended to manipulate the adversary's emotions to achieve an objective, while preemptive and vengeful punishments are *reactive strategies* that explain how a strategist's emotional reaction to a situation influences behavior and cognition. The study finds that emotions are indeed related to different instances of punishment, and emotions can be rooted in the strategist population at large. It also challenges the assumption that demoralization is more closely related to fear than sadness. Finally, it finds that reactive strategies are often not openly acknowledged and are frequently rationalized to shape a narrative. The emotion-centric approach is, therefore, useful in scrutinizing sentiments and interpreting underlying intentions.

Keywords: emotion, punishment, rationality, strategy, strategic studies

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1. Introduction and Research Problem

If an enemy bombs a city, by design or by carelessness, we usually bomb his if we can. In the excitement and fatigue of warfare, revenge is one of the few satisfactions that can be savored; and justice can often be constructed to demand the enemy's punishment, even if it is delivered with more enthusiasm than justice requires (Schelling 2008, 9).

The cost of human suffering is an enduring feature in armed conflict: the ambition to safeguard civilians from the ravages of war remains a crucial humanitarian task. Despite efforts to enhance civilian protection in armed conflicts, such as establishing international legal frameworks reflecting our ethical concerns, civilians continue to suffer immensely from armed conflict. Despite this, civilians are not only in the crossfires or forced to navigate a miserable situation, but they are also used as strategic targets by some armed actors. Some military actors exploit civilian security by subjecting them to strategic targeting if they perceive a benefit from human deprivation. This results in cases of actors intentionally inflicting harm and suffering on civilian populations. This can occur directly, such as through military attacks, or indirectly, by restricting access to aid or employing certain weapons that indiscriminately cause harm to civilians. This strategic targeting of civilians undermines moral and legal norms and may be a source of further instability and conflict (Flintoft 2018), warranting closer scrutiny to understand its implications on conflict dynamics.

Population-centric strategies are indeed utilized to affect a conflict's outcome or dynamics. In the strategic studies scholarship called *Punishment strategies*, these strategies are conceptualized as imposing high societal costs on the adversary population to change their behavior, subsequently affecting the adversary's behavior. For instance, inflicting damage to civilian infrastructure and population can demoralize the adversary government and its population, coercing them into concessions (Pape 1996, 46; Jones 2017, 188; Byman and Waxman 2002, 65-66).

The conceptualization of punishment strategies reflects a common assumption in strategic studies overall: war and strategy are a calculative, rational endeavor (Emeklier and Emeklier 2022, 45). A common definition of strategy originates from Clausewitzian thought: strategy

seeks to determine how to achieve a political objective through suitable military means, including methods and tactics (Clausewitz 2008, 133-134; Betts 2000, 6). In this view, rational strategic behavior and calculations, such as cost-benefit analyses, are needed to achieve the objective (Betts 2000, 6).

While not the focus of much scholarly attention, Clausewitz (2008, 100) believed emotions were integral to war and saw war as “an act of human intercourse”. Borrowing his view of war as a social interaction, a logical conclusion would be that emotions are integral to this social phenomenon, just as emotions are integral in any other social interaction. He criticized other theorists for not considering emotions in warfare, claiming it is “*one of a thousand errors* which they quite consciously commit because they have no idea of the implications” (Clausewitz 2008, 86, my emphasis). However, Clausewitz’s famous *Trinity of War* conceptualizes emotion as an opposing force to rationality, a perspective that has nurtured a dichotomous relationship that continues to influence strategic thinking (Zilincik 2022a, 1-5). Consequently, when theorists aim to understand war, they often neglect emotions and focus on understanding actors as rational by viewing strategy as a rational bargaining process (See Schelling 2008, 4). This dichotomy thus rejects emotions’ influence on decision-making since it is inherently defined as irrational and, therefore, unappealing.

Unfortunately, emotion and rationality as opposing forces negatively impact the theoretical understanding of decision-making since it limits the complex reality of decision-making: binary thinking misses the nuances of how emotions relate to strategic decision-making and is inherent in all human decisions (Zilincik 2022a, 3). The rationalist assumption that strategic decision-makers are rational by nature and view emotional responses as deviations seemingly often leads to dismissing practitioners as irrational or as “bad apples” due to deviant behavior, rendering their military conduct unworthy of further examination. However, these assumptions hinder our understanding of military decision-making and strategy.

As the introductory quote from Schelling articulately points out, punishment in war can intuitively come across as an example of how intense emotions are reflected in punishment strategies. Furthermore, these strategies are rationalized to justify them and portray them as rational - or emotionless - decision-making. The observed emotional aspect of punishment strategies invites further scrutiny, as the literature on strategic studies has not yet fully engaged with the theoretical implications of how emotions relate to punishment strategies.

The emotional aspect of punishment strategies can be illustrated; the Allied strategic bombing during World War II against German cities can serve as such. The ambition was to bomb military and civilian targets to weaken the war effort. It was thought that “moral bombing”, which aims to pressure the population into surrender through bombing campaigns, would have a more significant impact than “material bombing”, which focuses on targeting resources to reduce military capabilities (Gregory 2011, 251-252; Pape 1996, 258-260). For Arthur Harris, Commander-in-Chief of the British Bomber Command, the overarching objective was to obliterate entire German cities since he aimed to suppress everything and everyone that would contribute to the German war effort. He expressed pride in his destructive achievements and eagerly showcased them to his visitors (Gregory 2011, 253). This enthusiasm begs the question of whether firebombing Dresden was necessary for the war effort or if a need for emotional satisfaction also drove it.

Despite common depictions of punishment as a calculated, emotionless strategy within the strategic studies scholarship, there are compelling indications that emotions significantly shape punishment strategies in military contexts. This presents a paradox in the existing literature: while the literature often suggests punishment strategies as rational, empirical descriptions of such instances reveal emotional influence on strategic decision-making that challenges this notion. This paradox also suggests that punishment strategies can take various shapes and forms depending on the context; several types of punishment seem to exist, some of which current theorizing has neglected.

This tension between empirical observations and theoretical understanding of punishment strategies requires further scrutiny. Considering the strategic targeting of civilians is an inherent violation of international norms, morality, and rules, further understanding of the phenomenon is of the utmost importance. As a part of the “emotional turn” from rational theorizing (See Crawford 2000), this thesis takes another step into incorporating emotion-centric perspectives into strategic studies to deepen our understanding of how emotions relate to various punishment strategies.

1.1 Research Aim and Question

By challenging the conventional thinking of punishment strategies found in the strategic studies literature, the thesis aims to understand how emotions relate to different types of punishment. In doing so, a theoretical model based on an emotion-centered approach to strategic thinking is developed and illustrated with case studies.

To achieve this aim, the following questions are asked:

- How can different types of military punishments be conceptualized from an emotion-centric perspective?
- What new insights could this theoretical model offer to understand how different punishment strategies are carried out?

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured as follows. *Chapter Two* reviews relevant literature, establishing the scholarly context and current theoretical perspectives to address the thesis's aim. *Chapter Three* outlines the methodological approach regarding theory development, illustrative case studies, and material and case selection, as well as addresses and discusses its strengths and limitations. The methodology is presented before the theoretical model, maintaining a logical flow by detailing the process before the outcome. Consequently, *Chapter Four* introduces the theoretical model and typology developed for this study, which draws on existing research from emotion science and strategic studies. The typology significantly contributes to understanding the relationship between emotions and various punishment strategies, addressing the first research question specifically. *Chapter Five* presents and analyses the illustrative case studies and discusses the findings in relation to the typology's fruitfulness, specifically addressing the second research question. Finally, *Chapter Six* concludes the thesis, summarizing the key contributions, limitations and suggesting future areas to study.

2. Previous Research

This chapter provides the theoretical foundation for understanding how emotions relate to different types of punishment. It consists of three sections, critically reviewing relevant contributions to 1) strategic studies, 2) conceptualizations of punishment, and 3) emotion science. Finally, the last section concludes the chapter by emphasizing key insights from the review.

2.1 Strategic Studies: Foundations and Critique

Military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, one of the classical founders of strategic studies, continues to influence contemporary Western researchers (Zilincik 2022a, 4; Mattox 2008, 202). One prominent contribution is Clausewitz's concept of *the Trinity*. The Trinity can be summarized into three poles, or magnets, in which the character of war moves between. These poles are 1) emotions, 2) chances and probability, and 3) reason. Consequently, these poles are equated to 1) irrational warfare, 2) non-rational warfare, and 3) rational warfare. This assumption nurtures the idea that war must either move toward being emotional or rational (Zilincik 2022a, 4-5). In Betts's (1997, 8, my brackets) words, this is the "Clausewitzian problem: how to make force a rational instrument of policy rather than mindless [emotional] murder".

The assumption that it must be rational and understood as such has been nurtured by many scholars following Clausewitz. On a more modern note, Thomas Schelling is a pioneer in theorizing coercive strategy, primarily through his book *Arms and Influence*, first published in 1966. He views coercion as the threat of using force to influence the adversary's behavior and that coercion is an inherent part of diplomacy. His theory is anchored in assumptions that actors are bargaining, rational actors who act in their best interests: "Coercion requires finding a bargain, arranging for him to be better off doing what we want – worse off not doing what we want – when he takes the threatened penalty into account" (Schelling 2008, 4). Several other strategic studies scholars concerned with coercion, and particularly punishment strategy, share this underlying assumption (E.g. Pape 1996; Jones 2017; Byman and Waxman 2002; Siroky and Dzutsati 2015; Wilner 2011). Thus, the assumption that actors are rational is consistent in both the classical and coercion strategic studies literature.

Schelling (2008) offers more ways to conceptualize the use of force than through the lens of coercion. Similarly to Clausewitz's "mindless murder" (Betts 1997, 8), Schelling distinguishes brute force from coercion. Brute force entails inflicting pure damage to achieve a particular goal, whereas coercion utilizes the threat of pain as a bargaining tool to achieve the goal. Thus, he acknowledges that violence can be used to threaten and deter, but it can also be meaningless and get out of hand (Schelling 2008, 5, 8, 15). Schelling (2008, 9) also holds the view that violence can be inflicted due to the satisfaction of revenge, but neither elaborates if this is included in his concept of brute force nor what vengeful violence entails. This is enticing because Schelling (2008), Clausewitz (2008), and scholars influenced by them do not explore these types of violence extensively: the focus lies on the rationalization of war.

These assumptions have created a rational-emotional dichotomy in strategic studies literature. This review reveals that various forms of "irrational" or "emotional" violence have largely been acknowledged but overlooked in strategic studies, with a dominant focus on rational perspectives that dismiss anything deviating from the established norms. Schelling (2008) and Clausewitz (2008) mention that these types of violence exist but do not give them further room for academic exploration.

The rational assumption underpinning the study of coercion has faced criticism even from those employing it. Byman and Waxman (2002, 12) address flaws in the logic of rational coercion: "Because coercion tends to be framed as a threat, and thus in a negative manner, individuals may be more obstinate than rationality would suggest." Additionally, they address how various governments, along with the individuals within them, make decisions. As an example, Byman and Waxman (2002, 22) quote Schelling's *Arms and Influence* (2008, 85-86), emphasizing how collective decision-making depends on the government's internal politics and bureaucracy, as well as the chain of command, communication, pressure groups, and party structures, as well as individual values and careers. Therefore, how fear is framed and interpreted can drastically differ depending on the individual and their perception of the threat. Thus, they begin to question the rational assumption and how interpretations of threat affect strategy and hold that threat interpretations are subjective; however, they do not engage with this topic in greater depth, instead acknowledging it only as a caveat.

This review leads to the conclusion that strategic studies predominantly emphasize the rational aspects of strategies, reflecting the assumptions of many scholars. Political decision-making

aims to be “free from passion” and impulsive urges that can result in irrational and harmful actions. Therefore, it is unsurprising that these theories often focus on rational actor models (Hutchison and Bleiker 2014, 494). However, the rational-emotional dichotomization has resulted in a significant oversight of the emotional influences that motivate these strategies, dehumanizing strategic theory. Other scholars, such as Duyvesteyn and Worrall (2017, 349-350), critique the dominance of this rational paradigm, arguing that we must go beyond the paradigm to better understand strategy. To achieve this, they advocate interdisciplinary approaches, including the study of emotion in strategic contexts.

2.2 The Variety of Military Punishments: From Rational to Emotional

Punishment strategy is often found in coercion strategies. In this field of study, a classical definition of punishment strategy is the coercive attack on the adversary through direct or indirect damage to the civilian population. This concept is derived from a rational logic, in which the rise of societal costs of continued resistance becomes too grand to stand up against, resulting in concessions (Pape 1992, 437).

In the context of a state’s use of force, targeting civilians as a part of a punishment strategy aims to create unrest within the population. The ambition is to erode the civilian population’s trust in their own leadership, threatening decision-makers to concede. This might happen because of concerns regarding waning domestic support, civilian suffering undermining the capacity to fight, or a desire to safeguard the health of the civilian population (Byman and Waxman 2002, 65). From an insurgent perspective, the objective of civilian punishment is to decrease civilian morale and deter cooperation with the government by increasing societal costs for continued resistance. This is achieved by inflicting direct or indirect suffering on the population (Jones 2017, 188).

The concept of punishment strategy can be further clarified by contrasting it with denial strategy: two concepts that often overlap and can cause confusion. Coercion through *punishment* intends to threaten *civilian* vulnerabilities, and *denial* intends to threaten *military* vulnerabilities (Pape 1992, 425). Thus, embarking on the destruction of the adversary’s military capabilities and material assets used for such does not constitute a punishment strategy; if military capabilities are the target, it is not conceptualized as punishment.

Despite this seemingly clear theoretical distinction, these strategies are much harder to differentiate in urban environments. In urban environments, civilian infrastructure can be utilized for both civilian and military purposes. For instance, destroying civilian infrastructure, such as power stations, bridges, and roads, may have implications for both military conduct and civilian purposes (Durhin 2017, 179). Furthermore, the example of making civilians suffer to undermine the state's capacity to fight would thus be a strategy combining elements of punishment and denial. Therefore, some military actions can function as both punishment and denial strategies. The strategist's communicated intent may be indicative here, although the stated intent may not always be truthful, and some intentions may remain unclear. This could lead to strategic ambiguity. This emphasizes that the intentions behind punishment strategies can often be difficult to distinguish, much less officially confessed, as punitive actions can be strategically framed to disguise the punitive intentions.

Punishment strategies are also considered to have limited success. They often have a limited impact on the adversary's decision-making, and demoralization seldom achieves its goal to pressure the population into obedience or concessions. Instead, punishment strategies appear to lead to discontent among the population towards those implementing these strategies (Jones 2017, 169) or have a limited impact on the adversary's decision-making (Byman and Waxman 2002, 65; Pape 1992, 424). This thesis centers on decision-makers intentions using punishment strategies and does not examine the outcomes. However, this distinction is significant, as it reveals a misalignment between the strategists' assumptions about the results and the actual outcomes, suggesting a possible lack of understanding regarding the emotional relation to the strategy.

Up to this point, this section has highlighted that the examined conceptualizations of punishment strategy are built on rational assumptions: this is not surprising given that these definitions originate from the literature on strategic studies. However, there are other ways to conceptualize punishment strategies. As suggested by Duyvesteyn and Worrall (2017), exploring strategy from other perspectives may provide fruitful insights, which I find applicable to punishment strategy as well.

From the school of international law and just war theory, Steele (2013, 201-203, 207-208) explores revenge and punishment as an affective apparatus: that revenge and inflicting pain and violence can be emotionally satisfying. Not only does satisfying the emotional need for

punishment create acute consequences for civilians, but it also has other implications. First, with revenge-as-affective apparatus, proportionality is much more challenging to accomplish. Some may perceive an action as excessive, while others consider it inadequate. Thus, it is difficult to determine or measure if an act is proportionate or not, a concern raised by other scholars as well (See Gould 2009, 90-91; Durhin 2017). Second, it is difficult to claim that a violent act only has “‘one purpose’ (e.g., retribution and restoration) or a ‘just cause’ (e.g., deterrence or defense)” (Steele 2013, 203). This conceptualization of revenge aims to cause pain as a punishment for a committed wrongdoing. It is centered on the past and is driven by a desire to seek justice or restore pride for the offended self. Revengeful behavior tends to be overt and persistent, expressing little regard for material costs. The methods may be excessive and serve as symbolic acts (Steele 2013, 200). Steele’s (2013) contribution thus relates to Clausewitz’s (2008) and Schelling’s (2008) view of what “mindless murder” and “brute force” may entail since they hold a more emotional perspective on violence.

Similarly to Steele (2013), urban war scholar Bevan (2006, 73, 66) also addresses the dual purpose of military attacks. He suggests that retributive or demoralizing intentions may be accompanied by eradication objectives and questions whether the intention to undermine morale conceals underlying motivations, such as revenge and punishment. Bevan (2006, 62) further elaborates on how attacks on cities, inherently civilian, may carry a symbolic intention. Through area bombing the urban, the goal is to spread a mood – demoralization. He implies that the mood of “demoralization” is fear; however, this is not elaborated to a satisfying extent. Comparing his conceptualization of demoralization to Jones’s (2017), Byman’s, and Waxman’s (2002) conceptualizations of punishment strategies, does demoralizing always entail fear, or can the aim to instill hopelessness and a will to give up imply other emotions? Should demoralization aim to instill fear to deter continued resistance, provoke anger to generate friction between the population and their leadership, or foster defeatism through sadness? This ambiguity suggests that the concept could benefit from further theoretical refinement, especially regarding its relation to emotions.

Steele (2013) and Bevan (2006) emphasize that the application of force in warfare should not be restricted to seeing it as merely “rational” coercion but should also acknowledge the emotional dimensions. This resembles Schelling’s (2008) account of coercion and brute force, although he sees emotion in warfare (brute force) as dichotomous to coercion. The scholars find that emotionally driven punishment has an over-the-top, eradicated nature, whether it is

conceptualized as brute force (Schelling 2008), revenge as affect (Steele 2013), or the symbolic and demoralizing intention of attacking cities (Bevan 2006). Apart from this consensus, there is little other coherence in their studies, and emotion is only briefly mentioned in their respective works. The conceptualizations of punishment illustrate its variety but also create a lack of coherency and structure since there is no coherent typology of the various types of punishment and their relation to emotion. This scarcity calls for further engagement in order to understand how emotions relate to different types of punishments.

2.3 Emotion Science: Beyond the Rational-Emotional Dichotomy

Emotion science scholars recognize that emotions are an integral part of human being's existence, and therefore, human emotions should be acknowledged and considered (Emeklier and Emeklier 2022, 46-47). Emeklier and Emeklier (2022, 47) highlight how humans are multidimensional: “[the human] thinks and acts not only with reason, but also with experiences, beliefs, ideologies, values, psychological motives, and of course, emotions”, therefore they argue that humans should not be reduced to reason alone. Hence, politics is just as influenced by emotion as reason. This perspective could thus be beneficial in the thesis’s aim of understanding how emotions relate to different types of punishment.

A prominent discussion is the view of emotions as an individual or a social phenomenon. Some scholars focus on the biological aspect of emotions (Rosen 2005; see Bially Mattern 2011, 67). Others (E.g. Ross 2006, 199, 202-203; Bially Mattern 2011, 76-77; Bially Mattern 2014; Zilincik 2022b, 16; Mercer 2014) argue that emotions cannot be reduced to basic impulses; they create shared connections from socially constructed memories, habits, and identities, and they are contagious and can spread between individuals and in larger groups. Bially Mattern (2014, 590) endorses neuroscientists’ explanation of the brain’s capability to co-evolve with the social environment, entailing that emotions are acquired and shaped through social experiences – this phenomenon is called neuroplasticity. In short, this is a theoretical validation that emotions are as much social as they are biological. Thus, this entails that emotions manifest as both measurable, objective physiological states but also that emotion influence our subjective experience of a situation (Bially Mattern 2011, 71). Expanding on this view, Mercer (2014, 518) and Zilincik (2022b, 16) claim that a shared sense of identity, culture, and belonging can help emotions spread more easily, although diversity within groups must also be acknowledged.

Nevertheless, this underscores the importance of acknowledging how emotions are both individual and felt within oneself, as well as emotions' ability to spread and be formed by the environment.

Many emotion science scholars agree that a perception of a situation influences different behavioral and cognition responses but conceptualize this in various ways. Pursinainen and Forsberg (2021, 212-213) recognize how emotional appraisals trigger subjective experiences, physiological reactions, and behavioral changes. This can be presented in a simplified sequence: *a situation at hand* → *appraisal of the situation* → *emotional responses*. With a similar conceptualization of this sequence, Zilincik (2022a, 7-10) elaborates on how interpreting a situation at hand gives rise to different emotions. The emotions subsequently influence cognition and behavior due to their different characteristics and intensity. For instance, intense and negative emotions influence cognition and behavior more than less intense and positive emotions. Adding to the sequence, Wasinski (2017, 159) emphasizes that *perceptions of reality* affect the cognitive process. He claims that narratives, working as mediators between reality and perception, could interfere with the sequence. Therefore, socially constructed narratives may transform the sequence into: *reality* → *narrative* → *perception* → *emotion* → *reaction*. Thus, framing representations or narratives can influence emotions and, indirectly, reactions.

As alluded to, emotion science scholars widely reject the traditional rational-emotional dichotomy. Since neuroscientific research widely accepts that emotion and cognition are intertwined, scholars of emotion science commonly discard the strict rational-emotional divide (Pursinainen and Forsberg 2012, 217). Crawford (2014, 536) critiques Western philosophy's dichotomous framing in social sciences between mind/body, thinking/feeling, brain/mind, and rational/irrational. Wasinski (2017, 152-153) claims that the rationalization of war has generated an unemotional narrative of the use of force, while Mercer (2013, 248-249) critiques international relations theorizing for treating decision-makers as emotionless calculators or irrational (emotional) actors. Mercer (2013, 224) stresses that emotions play a critical role in decision-making by aiding the interpretation of signals and shaping responses in diplomacy and military strategy. He reminds us that Schelling's belief in game theory was grounded in the thought that strategy is creative: there is no "technical" solution to strategy since "deduction kills strategy because anything you deduce I can deduce, too" (Mercer 2013, 224). Other scholars who integrate perspectives from emotion science to strategic studies, such as Emeklier and Emeklier (2022, 54-56) and Zilincik (2022a, 4-5), claim that the Clausewitzian Trinity puts

reason and emotion as opposites in need of balancing, and criticize the mutually exclusive relationship between emotion and rationality. Since emotions are integral to all human endeavors, emotions are an essential component to understanding the meaning and complexity of all social activities, including war (Zilincik 2022b, 14). This strengthens the argument to move beyond the dichotomous conceptualization of emotion and reason and endorses the importance of previously neglected emotional-centric research in strategic studies scholarship.

2.4 Concluding Insights

The review of strategic studies literature highlights the predominance of rationalist assumptions in strategic studies theorizing at large, also prominent among coercion scholars theorizing about punishment strategy. The rational-emotional dichotomy in strategic studies may restrict our understanding of rationality and emotions in relation to military strategy. Therefore, I find it advantageous to utilize insights from emotion science to understand the different types of punishment and how they relate to emotions. This interdisciplinary approach challenges the view of rationality and emotion and allows for new conceptualizations of punishment strategies.

According to my research, the current state of studies does not conceptualize various types of punishment and does not address the puzzling question of how emotions are related to these different types of punishment. Although emotions are mentioned by several scholars, it is put on the periphery. A typology of different types of punishment and how they relate to emotions could give us insights into their relationship and increase our understanding of military strategy and warfare.

Since the main contribution of this thesis is developing a theoretical model aimed at enhancing our understanding of how emotions relate to different types of punishment, the methods used to create this model will be detailed before the model is introduced and illustrated.

3. Research Design

This chapter presents the methodological approach used in the study and evaluates its strengths and limitations. It begins by outlining the interdisciplinary and interpretive approach. Next, it details the theory development method, which challenges conventional theoretical assumptions and aligns with the interdisciplinary and interpretive approach. It also addresses the researcher's subjectivity. The chapter then explains how the two illustrative case studies will be analyzed through a descriptive typology. Finally, it discusses the case selection and material accessibility.

3.1 An Interdisciplinary and Interpretive Approach

Due to popular demand from strategic studies and emotion science scholars (e.g. Duyvesteyn and Worrall 2017; Bleiker and Hutchinson 2017), this thesis employs an interdisciplinary and interpretive approach to achieve its research objectives. Scholars (Bleiker and Hutchison 2017, 337-338; Klein 2011, 33) endorse the interdisciplinary approach to the study of emotions and propose that the value of interdisciplinary research lies in its ability to develop novel and meaningful perspectives on political puzzles. By integrating emotion science into strategic studies, this thesis utilizes the innovative strengths of an interdisciplinary approach to challenge rationalist assumptions regarding the conduct of punishment strategies and understand the relation between emotions and various types of punishments.

The interdisciplinary approach is complemented by an interpretive epistemology, focusing on understanding the phenomena within their specific contexts. Bleiker and Hutchinson's (2017, 337-338) approach to knowledge production accepts that insight does not necessarily yield measurable, objective, or entirely certain insights. Instead, they highlight how knowledge about emotions is subjective and context-dependent. This resonates with Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012, 23), who claim that interpretive research seeks to understand what a phenomenon does and how it is used in certain contexts. The interpretive approach is thus appropriate since, through this design, we can understand the phenomenon of punishment, interpret its intention(s), and how it is used differently in specific contexts. This design aligns with the aim of the thesis, which is to understand how different types of punishment relate to emotions.

3.2 Theory Development: Mystery as Method

Mystery as method is an abductive process that challenges conventional thinking with an empirical material/theory interplay. Interpretive researchers view theory-data-separated approaches as counterproductive and fruitless since the theoretical influence and researcher subjectivity can be mobilized to find exciting research problems (Alvesson and Kärreman 2011, 58-59; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 24-34). Thus, the dialogue with the empirical material is viewed as a part of the research process since it acts as a tool for developing theoretical ideas through the problematization and critical reflection of existing frameworks (Alvehus 2020, 12-13). In this sense, critique is viewed as a rigorous method rather than an outcome (Alvesson and Kärreman 2011, 45). Furthermore, previous researchers have endorsed abductive approaches when studying emotion in a military strategic context since it “conveys systematic and educated speculation” due to the inherent limitations of studying emotions in this context (Zilincik 2023, 117).

Engaging in empirical material through my subjective interpretation has revealed shortcomings in the theoretical preunderstanding of punishment strategies. The research problem was unearthed from my subjective experience in finding rational explanations for war that are, at times, insufficient. Specifically, my discontent lay with the rational explanations of how punishment strategies are conducted. My interpretation of empirical uses of punishment did not align with its theoretical explanations: *something is not said here*. This friction, coupled with a curiosity about how the phenomenon could be understood in a different light, has been the motivating factor for pursuing this research.

Theory development “is about challenging established assumptions and more than just fine-tuning or expansion of earlier theory” (Alvesson and Kärreman 2011, 59). While I share assumptions with other scholars, such as rejecting the rational-emotional dichotomy, I find it necessary to align with certain assumptions to some extent to contribute to a cumulative and coherent field of study. Therefore, this thesis honors the requests for further theoretical coherence in emotion science (Pursinainen and Forsberg 2021, 239) by being cumulative and providing a theoretical contribution based on the identified tension between theoretical assumptions about punishment strategies and empirical observations.

Furthermore, the thesis’s theoretical contribution is unique in several ways. By acknowledging the critiques found in previous literature, an original model has been constructed that applies these insights specifically to punishment strategies. This is where the mystery arose: by

empirically observing a phenomenon that I found current theoretical explanations did not sufficiently address. Thus, the current theoretical explanations regarding punishment strategies have been problematized, and through my research, I found that other scholars have seen issues in similar, albeit not the same, phenomena.

Since researcher subjectivity is a part of the method, it is important to be self-critical and reflexive about one's biases and assumptions (Alvesson and Kärreman 2011, 58). Being transparent about one's positionality makes it more accessible for scrutiny and inclusion within the larger research paradigm, which increases the study's trustworthiness (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 80-81). For this study, I find it essential to be transparent about the biases and assumptions that I have brought into the theory development. Therefore, I aim to be transparent about these assumptions, which are detailed in the next chapter when the theory is introduced.

3.3 Illustrative Case Studies

The thesis makes a theoretical contribution by providing a typology, the *Punishment Typology*, which categorizes four different types of punishment to bring clarity and order to a complex and often contradictory reality. Through descriptive analysis, the typology aids in determining whether a specific phenomenon - punishment strategies - aligns with a defined theoretical type, offering a structured approach to understanding empirical phenomena. Subsequently, the contribution is primarily theoretical rather than empirical, emphasizing the contribution of a theoretical model that serves as a tool for interpretation and classification (Esaiasson et al. 2017, 136-137). Thus, the case studies serve to *illustrate* the theoretical development and also contribute to refining the theory.

Several requirements need to be met when constructing a typology. The distinct types of punishment, their construction, and the research supporting the theory development must be clearly outlined. To achieve this, each type of punishment, how they are identified, and its basis in prior research will be detailed. The typology must also adhere to specific and consistent principles. To fulfill this requirement, the criteria for classifying each type of punishment will be explicitly detailed in the theory chapter, such as declaring the different strategies and emotions underlying each type. The categorization is also consistent, ensuring that each type of

punishment remains distinct without any other lap or conflict with other types (Esaiasson et al. 2017, 138).¹

While the different types of punishment must be mutually exclusive theoretically, this is not a condition for empirical analysis. Indeed, it is common for the boundaries of theoretical concepts to become vague through empirical analysis. Nevertheless, it is important to be transparent about the expectation of these blurring lines for the trustworthiness of the analysis (Esaiasson et al. 2017, 139). As the descriptive analysis will showcase, many empirical cases have tendencies of several types of punishments, and often, many emotions are relevant in each case. However, the typology and illustrative case studies aim to *simplify* reality through classifications, which creates order in a complex reality (Esaiasson et al. 2017, 136). Thus, “empirical disorder” is expected, and the purpose of the typology is to bring order to the “disorder”.

Descriptive analyses may also focus solely on creating order among conventional and well-established sociopolitical classifications, such as challenging dichotomous divisions (Esaiasson et al., 2017, 136-137). This thesis contributes by adding to the deconstruction of the rational-emotional dichotomy by illustrating how different types of punishment relate to emotions and emphasizing that decisions in warfare are influenced by emotional factors. While not the primary focus of this thesis, this contribution enriches the discourse by challenging the dichotomy and highlighting the nuances of the role of emotions in warfare.

3.4 Case Selection and Material

To illustrate the different types of punishment, two case studies will be analyzed: the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) during the Gaza War (2008-2009) and the British Royal Air Force (RAF) during the firebombing of Dresden (1945). The cases originate from different historical periods, featuring both regular and irregular warfare, so the developed theory is informed by and applicable to a wider range of conflicts. Furthermore, these cases were selected because each demonstrates two types of punishment, allowing for a deeper exploration of how multiple forms

¹ The emotion *fear* will be related to two types of punishment. These types are, however, based on different logics of *manipulating emotions* versus *reacting to emotions*, making them distinguishable. This difference will be clarified in the theory chapter.

of punishment can coexist. This approach underscores how actors often pursue several intentions simultaneously, which are often influenced by emotions, even while not always publicly declared.

Although the two selected cases will adequately illustrate my theory, I consider it important to address the limitations of material accessibility in depth. Indeed, the most significant limitation of emotion science research is the material accessibility to emotions, as it is hard to identify what emotions and feelings a person internally experiences (Pursiainen and Forsberg 2021, 216). Emotions may be undetected or misidentified, a challenge inherent in emotion science research (Dolan 2016, 578). Despite the widely acknowledged problem of material accessibility (E.g. Pursiainen and Forsberg 2021, 216; Wettergren 2015, 115), the growing recognition of emotions' impact on foreign policy has led to the development of diverse feasible methodologies and approaches to addressing this issue (Pursiainen and Forsberg 2021, 239-240).

One effective approach involves contextualizing emotions within the specific situation in which they are expressed. Pursiainen and Forsberg (2021, 216) highlight that emotions are not solely internal mental states but also manifest through the social and cultural contexts (Zilincik 2022b, 16; Crawford 2000, 125; Pursiainen and Forsberg 2021, 225; See also Clément and Sangar 2018, 10-11). While social scientists cannot directly observe the neurological processes (See Pursiainen and Forsberg 2021, 217-218), we can interpret how emotions are expressed and make educated interpretations of how emotions relate to different types of punishments in a certain context. By treating emotions as social and cultural phenomena expressed through social interactions and expressions, the analysis captures how emotions relate to different punishment strategies. As mentioned in the review of previous research, this is a scientifically sound and endorsed approach to studying emotions.

When sentiments from specific decision-makers are identified, they will thus be anchored to the larger context in which they are situated. While I recognize that populations are not a homogenous group, and thus, there is a diversity of emotions within a population, the illustrative case studies are meant to briefly demonstrate the theory rather than provide an in-depth case analysis. Therefore, the analysis will identify the emergence and nature of emotions in a broader sense, and as such, some degree of generalization is necessary (Hutchison and Bleiker 2014, 493).

The controversial nature of using force against civilians further complicates obtaining candid testimonies from decision-makers. Publicly declared intentions often differ from concealed motives, making distinguishing between political narratives and underlying truths difficult. For instance, primary sources such as biographies are included, although relying solely on these is limiting due to the aforementioned reasons. To address these limitations, the thesis employs a combination of secondary sources, including scholarly works such as articles and books containing interview responses, letter correspondence, and public statements. Critical engagement when studying these cases has made it easier to find sentiments that actors might want to diminish or hide to construct and maintain their narrative. For instance, Finkelstein's (2018) study presents quotes from interviews with IDF officers, and Overy (2005) has cited letters between decision-makers in RAF, which are useful empirics for this thesis's analysis to unearth sentiments. This intertextual approach provides multiple perspectives on each subject of analysis. This entails that the thesis achieves evidence across multiple types of sources - and critical perspectives on various narratives - which aids my understanding of each case study (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 51).

With this methodological outline in hand, the next chapter will turn to theoretical development, which proposes an interpretive and interdisciplinary framework that builds upon the previously reviewed literature on strategic studies, various conceptualizations of punishment, and emotion science.

4. Theoretical Development

Building on existing research on strategy, punishment, and emotions, this chapter offers a typology to understand how emotions relate to various types of punishment, directly addressing the thesis's first research question: “*How can different types of military punishments be conceptualized from an emotion-centric perspective?*” The chapter begins by defining key concepts and outlining the assumptions underlying the theoretical development. Next, the *Punishment Typology* is presented, with each component of the typology elaborated in subsequent sections. The first subsection outlines two strategic categories: *coercive* and *reactive punishment strategies*. Examining their relation to emotion results in four distinct types of punishment: *deterrent, demoralizing, preemptive, and vengeful punishment*. The discussions in each section will focus on the strengths and limitations of the developed theory.

4.1 Definitions

Punishment is defined as the intentional infliction of harm or suffering on an adversary’s civilian population, either directly or indirectly, as a strategic means to achieve military or political objectives. While all forms of punishment inherently cause harm to civilians, they differ in intent and function: the distinctions for each type of punishment will be elaborated further. The definition is anchored in existing research but has not been developed solely as a coercive instrument (See Pape 1992; Byman and Waxman 2002; Jones 2017): punishment is not exclusively a bargaining strategy.

Affect, emotions, and feelings are essential to distinguish: the concepts are often treated synonymously, and there are conflicting definitions of the terms within the scientific community (See Zilincik 2023, 3; Clément and Sangar 2018, 4-5; Sasley 2010, 688-689). Therefore, this thesis adheres to the definitions provided by Clément and Sangar (2018, 5), as their conceptualization builds upon the work of influential international relations emotion science scholars such as Crawford (2000), Mercer (2014), Ross (2006), and Hutchison and Bleiker (2014).

*In a simplified fashion, **affect** refers to non-reflective bodily sensations, which are situated before and beyond consciousness. In contrast, an **emotion** is said to refer to the “subjective experience of some diffuse physiological change” and has “intersubjective, and cultural components”. Finally, a*

feeling can be defined as the “conscious awareness that one is experiencing an emotion”; though internally experienced, the meaning attached to them is cognitively and culturally constructed (Clément and Sangar 2018, 5. Emphasis added, citations removed).

In addition to this definition of emotion, the thesis incorporates Zilincik’s (2023, 3) clarification that emotions also have intersubjective and cultural components, which entail underlying meanings, motives, thoughts, and beliefs that are shaped by social and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the analysis will not focus on affect, as bodily sensations are challenging to analyze through textual analysis. However, it is important to recognize the interconnectedness between physiological effects and emotions.

Throughout the following chapters, I will refer to the term *strategist*. By this, I mean the actor who pursues the strategy. While the strategist may seemingly be interpreted as only one person, it is often referred to as a group, such as the IDF and the RAF in the illustrative case studies.

4.2 Assumptions from an Emotion-Centric Perspective

This section highlights key theoretical assumptions underpinning the development of my theoretical model, which will be utilized to understand how emotion relates to different types of punishments. The section reiterates valuable insights from the literature review and clarifies the foundation of the theory, which provides trustworthiness by acknowledging my assumptions. The assumptions can be summarized into 1) military strategists are affected by emotions in their military conduct, 2) actions should be assessed on a continuum of rationality, and 3) emotions as a social phenomenon.

1) Military strategists are affected by emotions in their military conduct

While rationalist scholars often believe that emotion undermines rationality, enforcing the rational-emotional dichotomy, I reject the dichotomy similarly to other emotion science scholars. Instead, I subscribe to the notion that a decision or act is always impacted by emotion, regardless of rationality. Emotional stimuli influence emotions, which subsequently influence cognition and behavior. Emotions, therefore, function as a tool of interpretation, acting as an internal decision-making mechanism that indicates when information is sufficient, the credibility of commitment, the suitability of changing perspective, who to trust, and what

someone might think or want. Thus, emotions are a tool for interpreting a situation, entailing that military strategist's emotion influence their decision-making.

2) Actions should be assessed on a continuum of rationality

The emotion-centric approach recognizes that rationality may differ depending on how the emotional experience matches the situation, both in intensity and situational relevance. Overwhelming emotions, such as fear, anger, or sadness, can feel intense. If not effectively regulated, they may yield disproportionate behavioral and cognitive responses to the situation at hand. If an emotional response is disproportionate or irrelevant to the situation at hand, it is less rational (Zilincik 2022a, 6-7). Fear can be a rational response if the situation contains a real threat, but sometimes people fear situations that do not contain a real threat or have a disproportionate response to the perceived threat. Furthermore, regulating emotion is not removing emotion; the will to regulate often stems from another emotion (Zilincik 2024, 245). Considering this, I suggest viewing rationality as a continuum: an act can be more or less rational. Instead of categorizing an actor as rational or irrational, the degree of rationality of each decision or act needs to be evaluated contextually.

It is important to note that evaluating rationality is beyond the thesis scope. However, clarifying the conceptualization of rationality is necessary to clarify the assumptions and logic underlying the theoretical development; it plays an important role in challenging the rational-emotional dichotomy.

3) Emotions as a social phenomenon

Previous emotion science literature acknowledges the objective ontological assumption of emotions as both subjective and materialistic experiences. Emotions are neither solely a cognitive or physiological phenomenon but also a social phenomenon shaped by and expressed within group dynamics. Emotions are influenced by collective experiences, cultural norms, and interpersonal interactions, making them inherently relational and embedded in the social context. This entails that emotions may be identified as a shared emotion both between individuals and in a larger group. This is supported by the argument that the brain's neuroplasticity enables it to co-evolve and shape with its social environment. This thesis aims to understand emotion as a subjective and social phenomenon; however, it also acknowledges that emotions have objective effects and draws from these insights, such as different emotion characteristics and effects.

4.3 The Punishment Typology

Figure 1 illustrates the *Punishment Typology*. The *Strategic Process* reflects whether the cognitive process of the strategist yields a *coercive* or *reactive strategy*. A coercive strategy strives to manipulate the emotions of the adversary’s population, and a reactive strategy is an emotional response to a situation. Furthermore, the arrows reflect different *emotions*. Emotions have different characteristics, influencing cognition and behavior differently. Regarding coercive strategies, the arrow represents the emotion that the strategist strives to instill, and for reactive strategies, it is the emotion the strategy is experiencing and interpreting through. Finally, this gives shape to four different types of punishment outcomes: *deterrent*, *demoralizing*, *preemptive*, and *vengeful punishment*. Each part of the Punishment Typology is elaborated on in subsequent subsections.

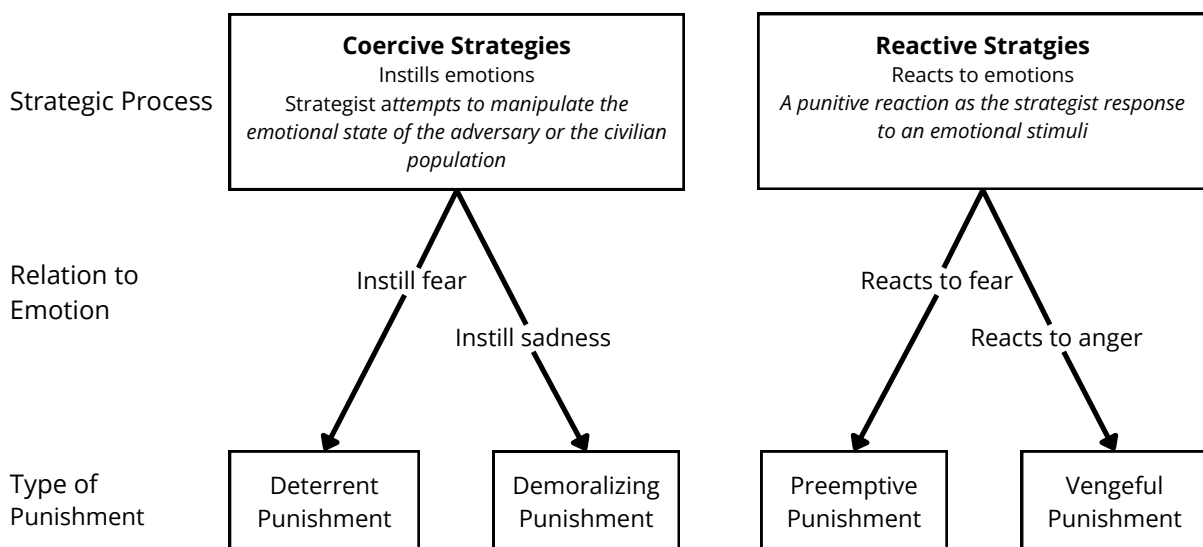


Figure 1. *The Punishment Typology. The typology of four different types of punishment and their relation to emotions*

4.3.1 Strategic Process

Starting at the top of the Punishment Typology, this section aims to clarify the logic of the *Strategic Processes*. By integrating the emotion science perspective and strategic studies conceptualizations of punishment, two concepts are constructed that capture two different cognitive processes related to punishments: *Coercive and Reactive Strategies*. Strategic processes reflect the cognitive process from the appraisal of a situation to a cognitive change, yielding in either coercive or reactive strategies. These concepts explain an important difference

in nature: through coercive strategies, the strategists aim to manipulate an adversary’s emotions, while through reactive strategies, the strategist is influenced by external stimuli. To explain the logic of the different types, a graphic model has been constructed to clarify the logic underpinning these two strategic processes. This is illustrated in Figure 2 and has two examples in cursive text.

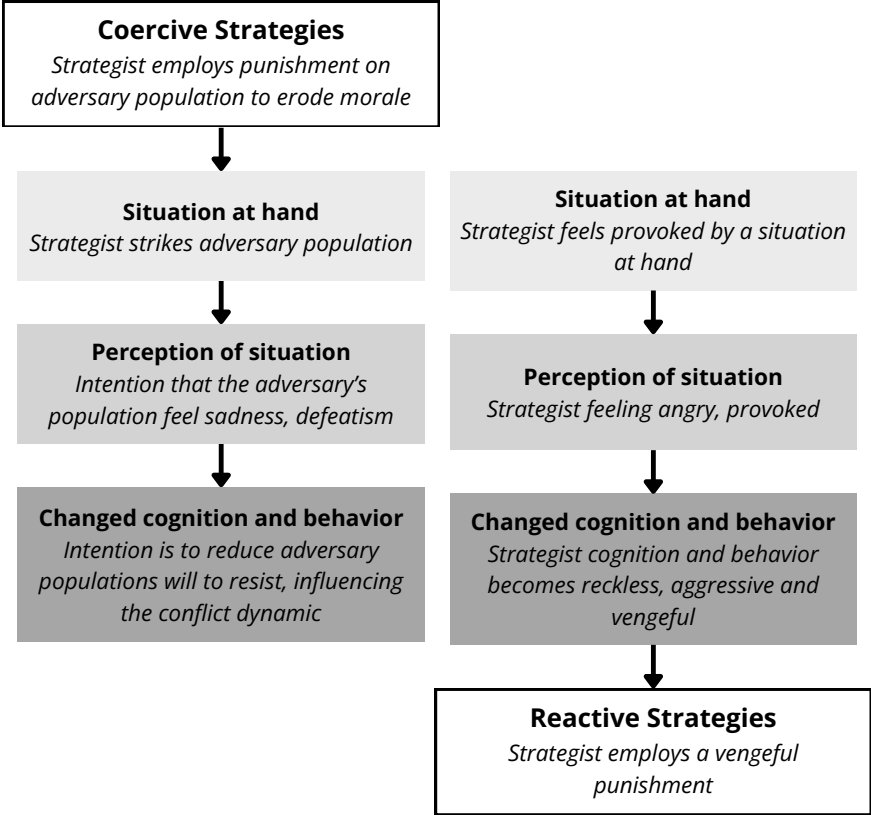


Figure 2. The model of the two strategic processes illustrates the logic of instilling emotions (coercive strategies) and reacting to emotions (reactive strategies).

Anchored in the literature about coercion, punishment is often conceptualized as a coercive tool to get the adversary to do what the strategist wants, for instance, to erode the morale within a civilian population for a strategic advantage. Scrutinizing this logic of punishment through an emotion-centric perspective, this strategy is about the strategist's aim to manipulate adversaries’ emotions and, subsequently, their cognition and behavior. The punishment and the emotional stimuli that come with it aim to affect the manipulated emotion on their behavior and cognition. Thus, this cognitive process results in *Coercive Strategies*.

For instance, if a civilian in the adversary population experiences a personal loss, such as losing a family member (an external stimulus; the situation at hand) following a bombing of a civilian

target, the experience may cause emotions such as sadness. This emotion may influence cognition and behavior, such as feeling pessimistic and decreased will (Zilincik 2022b, 23. The characteristics of each emotion will be elaborated later). This exemplifies how the strategist may use punishment strategies to coerce and manipulate the adversary population's emotions.

Who is the target of the emotional manipulation? This can differ depending on the context. It is usually the civilian population that is subject to the strategist's harm or that population's state leadership. However, it could also extend to manipulate multiple adversaries. For instance, it may serve to manipulate an international audience or the strategist's own population. Thus, it may also be multiple adversaries. For simplicity, I will refer broadly to the adversary when presenting the theory, although the analysis will provide more specific distinctions.

Just as the strategist may use punishment to manipulate an adversary's emotional state, the strategist themselves may be provoked by a situation or event, leading them to use punishment in reaction. *Reactive Strategies* are thus a response to external stimuli that influence a specific behavior to fulfill an emotional need. If the emotion is intense, and the actor behaves accordingly and does not regulate the emotional response, the use of force may get out of hand and become disproportionate.

For instance, the strategist may interpret a situation (an external stimulus) as a provocation, causing them to feel emotions such as anger. This anger may incite reckless and aggressive behavior, such as aiming to harm the adversary who hurt them. This exemplifies how the strategist may perceive a situation, and their subjective interpretation and emotional characteristics influence their cognition and behavior, subsequently influencing their military decision-making.

As highlighted when declaring the theoretical assumptions underlying this model, it is important to acknowledge that emotion affects decision-making either way, regardless of whether it is explained as coercive or reactive strategies. The conceptualization of coercive strategies does not specify which emotions drive the behavior of those enacting the punishment. However, the actors implementing coercive punishment are not emotionless; all actions are influenced by emotional states, whether it is fear, anger, or even a state of calmness or serenity. Coercive strategies aim to influence emotion, even if they act on emotion. In contrast, reactive

strategies are a reaction to emotion but can still instill emotions in others: these aspects are not the focus of what the concept captures.

4.3.2 *Emotions*

Emotions are reactions to stimuli that influence cognition and behavior. By shaping our cognition, emotions influence us to act in certain ways. The arrows in the Punishment Typology (See Figure 1) reflect the emotional relations of each type of punishment. This section will briefly explain the characteristics of the emotions before moving on to the next section, which elaborates on how the emotion is related to each type of punishment.

Sadness has a pessimistic cognitive characteristic and motivates a person to abandon objectives they consider to be lost. Sadness can, therefore, lessen the will to fight and motivate surrender. (Zilincik 2022a, 8). It often entails a sense of loss and shifts focus inward, fostering resignation and adjustment of goals and plans (Bonanno et al. 2008, 798-799).

Fear cognitively motivates a search for security through fight, flight, freeze, or befriending responses. Thus, fear can make an actor engage in various behaviors depending on the response (Zilincik 2022a, 8-9; Zilincik 2022b, 14-15). Anxiety is related to fear, which both are threat-centered emotions and have the same physiological effects. While fear is conceptualized as triggered by a defined fear-eliciting threat, anxiety is a state of anticipating potential threats. Anxiety can thus be viewed as an enduring manifestation of fear (Öhman 2008, 710).

Anger cognitively makes an actor optimistic, bold, and reckless, which can motivate aggressive behavior (Zilincik 2022a, 8). The purpose of anger is to correct or change an (unjust) situation, with vengeful feelings associated with it often stemming from a desire to restore one's self-image. Additionally, a repeated violation of one's sense of justice may manifest as hatred, which tends to concentrate on eradicating the hated group or individual (Doorn 2018, 321-322).

4.3.3 *Types of Punishment*

At the bottom of Figure 1, the four different types of punishment. This section will present each type and clarify their relation to emotions.

Deterrent punishment is a coercive strategy that is aimed at preventing unwanted behavior by instilling fear in the adversary or its population. The emotional connection to this type is *fear*,

which is a deterrent by emphasizing the severe consequences of future offenses. The strategy involves inflicting harm on the civilian population to create a pervasive sense of fear, thereby discouraging unwanted actions. Deterrent punishment is identified through the strategist's statements and sentiments that explicitly aim to instill fear to prevent unwanted behavior.

Demoralizing punishment is a coercive strategy designed to break the will of the adversary or its population by instilling *sadness*. The emotional connection is sadness, which diminishes motivation and discourages continued resistance. By inflicting harm to the civilian population, the strategy focuses on eroding morale and instilling a sense of defeat, discouraging continued opposition. This strategy is identified through statements and sentiments intended to evoke sadness and defeatism to demoralize the adversary.

Preemptive punishment is a reactive strategy aimed at preventing feared actions by imposing consequences on the adversary in anticipation of a potential threat. Its emotional connection is to *fear* (and anxiety), which drives the strategist's anticipation of harmful outcomes and motivates preventative measures. It involves inflicting harm on the civilian population to hinder the adversary's ability or willingness to act on the perceived threat. Preemptive punishment is identified through the strategist's statements and sentiments expressing fear of a threat and their preemptive actions to inflict harm.

Vengeful punishment is a reactive strategy driven by *anger* and intended to restore pride or save face after an attack or humiliation. The emotional connection is anger, which fuels bold, overt, and often reckless actions aimed at retribution. The strategy emphasizes persistent punishment with little regard for material cost, driven by a desire to restore pride or get revenge by inflicting harm on the civilian population. Vengeful punishment is identified through statements and sentiments of anger that motivate the infliction of harm.

4.4 Final Clarifications

This model highlights the significant role emotions play in strategic decision-making regarding punishment strategies while acknowledging that other factors also contribute to the overall decision-making process. While emotions may not always be the dominating or only factor influencing strategic decision-making regarding punishment strategies, they are crucial, often overlooked, aspects that shape these strategies (Pursiainen and Forsberg 2021, 209; Zilincik

2023, 117). This model shows how different emotions, and whether they are manipulated by the strategist or a strategist's response to emotional stimuli, relate to different punishment strategies and how their characteristics differ.

While the four different types of punishment are theoretically separated, they can overlap empirically. This means coercive and reactive strategies could happen simultaneously, and the reality is not as clear-cut as these theoretical distinctions. This entails that a coercive strategy may be motivated by the same emotions that motivate a reactive strategy, even though the purpose of the concept is not to capture this and must be assessed in context. The strategic processes instead make a crucial distinction between manipulating emotions and reacting to emotions, which are both processes relevant to strategy, although previous coercion scholars have focused on coercive manipulation. Clarifying this logic of cognitive processes is essential for enhancing our understanding of how emotions relate to various types of punishment.

The same argument for making theoretical distinctions applies to emotions as well: while emotions are theoretically distinct, they can overlap in practice. Emotions also have the ability to influence other emotions, such as fear, which can affect aggressive behavior (related to anger) through its fight response or lead to defeatism (related to sadness) via its flight response. This will be highlighted further now that the illustrative case studies will be presented.

5. Illustrative Case Studies and Analysis

The illustrative case studies serve to demonstrate the typology's different types of punishment and how they relate to emotions. The case studies focus on the punitive and emotional elements of the cases, which concisely illustrates the Punishment Typology. The two cases are 1) the Gaza War (2008-2009), focusing on the events leading up to and including Operation Cast Lead, and 2) the British firebombing of Dresden (1945). Each case study illustrates two types of punishment strategies, emphasizing how emotions are tied to different types of punitive warfare. The chapter ends with a discussion of the theoretical contribution and limitations in relation to the case studies.

5.1 Deterrent and Preemptive Punishment: The Gaza War (2008-2009)

Operation Cast Lead, initiated by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in late December 2008, was a military operation in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. The operation was framed by IDF as a response to the increased threat posed by Hamas, which had a growing political and military influence in Gaza following the coming to power of the Hamas government in 2007. This concerned Israeli decision-makers because Hamas had a more aggressive stance against Israel than its predecessors: Hamas denied Israel's right to exist, launched rockets into Israeli villages and cities, and opposed the peace process. Hamas was also responsible for capturing an IDF soldier, which heightened tensions between Hamas and Israel (Bregman 2016, 309-310).

Israel's approach to Operation Cast Lead is deeply rooted in its existential anxiety—a persistent fear of annihilation. The denial of Israel's existence has been a critical issue and a sore spot for many Israelis. This threat perception influences Israel's behavior and, therefore, impacts the relational dynamics between regional actors and abroad. Consequently, it is of great importance to understand Israel from an emotional perspective in order to interpret (David 2009, 299) the Hamas-Israel conflict, Israel's perception of the conflict, and its conduct of war.

Israel's threat perception and existential anxiety go centuries back. Jews worldwide have long faced antisemitism, pogroms, and persecution. After the Holocaust, the United Nations declared the state of Israel due to this perceived necessity of establishing a haven and homeland for Jews

(Bregman 2016, 2, 7, 9; Gordon and Arian 2001, 199; Yair 2014, 351-352).² This historically contextualizes Israel's anxious state of mind, but the threats of their neighbors have continued thereafter. As a response to the declaration of the state of Israel, its neighbors invaded Israel in an attempt to destroy it (David 2009, 300; Bregman 2016, 10-11, 333), and Israel has been involved in numerous conflicts with its neighbors and Iran since then. The main concern in their neighbor's rhetoric has centered around ending the occupation of Arab lands and freeing Palestine, although they have periodically refused to make peace, negotiate with, and recognize Israel as a state (David 2009, 300). Three years before the operation, in 2005, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made several threats to Israel, such as "Israel must be wiped off the map" and "I have no doubt that [we] will soon wipe this scourge of shame [Israel] from the Islamic World" (David 2009, 300-301, authors brackets). The threat perception of Iran is especially relevant to mention since they support Hamas (David 2009, 312-313).

Indeed, their existential anxiety is a driver of their behaviors. Outside observers, such as *The Economist* journalists, have reported that Israel often acts in paranoid, bold, and aggressive ways. This fear of annihilation often exacerbates rather than mitigates conflict, resulting in even more fear (Yair 2014, 358). This argument is strengthened by Israelis who were surveyed and interviewed by Yair (2014). Many Israelis are aware of the common anxious perception and subsequent overreactions from their self-victimization (Yair 2014, 358-359). The perceptions and subjective feelings regarding their existential anxiety construct a lens from which situations are interpreted. The bold and aggressive behavior may result from fear-induced behaviors that trigger a fight response. Moreover, anxiety may cause catastrophic thinking, making it difficult to see the nuances of a situation and expecting the worst. This mindset, combined with escalating security concerns regarding Hamas, presents a context in which Israeli leadership decided to launch an operation against the group.

When Israel saw increased threats from Hamas, the IDF decided to conduct an operation against Hamas. The IDF's official objectives were to 1) stop rocket and mortar attacks on Israeli villages and 2) attack routes between Sinai and Gaza that supplied Gaza with smuggled food, medicine, and arms. However, the IDF also had undeclared objectives. Two years earlier, Israel's war in

² This history is also used by Zionists to justify the existence of Israel. Yair (2014, 351-354) provides an interesting account of how religious and mythological storytelling affects the emotional contexts of Israelis, amplifying anxiety. This is an example of Wasinski's (2017) theory of how narratives can interfere with reality, perceptions of reality, and emotions.

Lebanon in 2006 had damaged the IDF's reputation due to poor performance (Bregman 2016, 315; Finkelstein 2018, 27). Due to this operational failure, the Israeli leadership felt a need to restore their deterrence capability. By restoring its deterrence credibility, it could project power and show its enemies - primarily Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, and Syria - the high costs of attacking them. This deterrence could be demonstrated through a large punitive operation in Gaza (Bregman 2016, 315).

This shows that although the stated objectives are described as "emotionless" and "simply" military objectives, their undeclared objectives can also be interpreted as *deterrent* and *preemptive punishment*. Starting with the latter, preemptive punishment is intentionally inflicting harm or suffering on a civilian population as a reaction to the strategist's threat perception of the situation at hand. The IDF is interpreted to be frightened by Hamas's rise to power and wants to weaken them. Iran's support for Hamas grew when the organization came to power, supplying them with arms and financing (Kam 2009, 70-71; David 2009, 312-313). To create pressure on Hamas, Israel utilized its strong military presence in the air and sea, along with control at Gaza's entrances, to enforce an economic blockade against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. This illustrates that the civilian population was targeted in the operation, a collective punishment resulting in a deteriorating livelihood for the Gazans (Finkelstein 2018, 15-16). Acting on a sense of fear of their growing power and aiming to hinder Hamas from gaining more power is an example of preemptive punishment. They also seem to act on fear due to the perception that other actors, including state actors, would undermine their military might.

Secondly, deterrent punishment is a strategy that aims to instill fear in an adversary to prevent unwanted behavior. This is related to the perceived need to restore the IDF's deterrence capability since it reflects the fear that other adversaries will undermine their military capabilities due to previous operational failures in Lebanon. The deterrent punishment was also directed against the Palestinian population in Gaza. The IDF aimed to instill fear in the Palestinian population, to frighten them from supporting Hamas (Finkelstein 2018, 22). This can be exemplified by Reserve Major-General Amiram Levin's statement: "What we have to do is act systematically, with the aim of punishing all the organizations that are firing the rockets and mortars, as well as the civilians who are enabling them to fire and hide" (Finkelstein 2018, 22).

The IDF had also trained extensively in preparation for Operation Cast Lead in order to conduct a powerful operation: it was important that their power projection would have a strong communicative ability of their military might (Johnson 2011, 97-102). This aim has been increasingly prioritized due to an underlying fear of their neighbors undermining them. Thus, it may be interpreted that these preparations were driven by a fear of being perceived as weak.

The deterrent punishment is reflected in several instances. Israeli media claimed that the air campaign was designed to “engender a sense of dread” (Finkelstein 2018, 23). This is interpreted as instilling fear; thus, this media source interprets a deterrent aim of the campaign.

By scrutinizing statements from different persons in leadership positions, deterrent intentions are reflected. Deputy Prime Minister Eli Yishai’s statement reflects the ambition of destroying Gaza, a densely populated area, in order to instill fear in their adversaries:

It [should be] possible to destroy Gaza, so that they will understand not to mess with us... It is a great opportunity to demolish thousands of houses of all the terrorists, so they will think twice before they launch rockets... I hope the operation will come to an end with... the complete destruction of terrorism and Hamas... [T]hey should be razed to the ground, so thousands of houses, tunnels and industries will be demolished (Finkelstein 2018, 22, their brackets).

Furthermore, discussions with IDF officers in February and April 2009 reveal the importance of communicating the IDF deterrence capabilities to multiple adversaries and its own population:

It was important to Israel to demonstrate—both to its adversaries and its own population—the competence of its ground forces and its willingness to use them. This was particularly true in the case of calling up reserves, an act that is very expensive and inherently disruptive to day-to-day life in Israel (Johnson 2011, 114).

Why is it important that the IDF communicates Israel’s military might to its own population? While it is understood that they aim to restore deterrence capabilities, it also seems crucial for

them to maintain credibility with their own people. Showcasing their competence and ability to safeguard the population justifies mobilizing reservists to contribute, keep, and nurture their military might. Projecting power and instilling fear in their own population might, in this context, be interpreted as perceiving IDF's ability to protect their population. This is a distinctly different characteristic from the fear instilled in Israel's adversaries.

To conclude this illustration, Operation Cast Lead exemplifies the strategies of *deterrent punishment* and *preemptive punishment*. The *deterrent punishment* is reflected by the operation's ambition to instill *fear* through the IDF's power projection. This fear is directed toward Hamas, the Palestinian populace, as well as other actors such as Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran. It is also *preemptive punishment* since the IDF acted out of *fear* of Hamas's growing power in Gaza and wanted to limit this development. Additionally, the case study highlights the underlying existential anxiety that shapes Israeli policy. This fear, while understandable given Israel's historical and geopolitical context, may lead to disproportionate responses that exacerbate rather than resolve tensions in the region. As illustrated here, Israel's perception of increased hostilities from Hamas and the fear that others perceive them as weak following the Lebanon failure resulted in a response rooted in anxiety and fear, culminating in punishment against the Palestinian populace.

Despite efforts to mitigate harm to civilians following Operation Cast Lead, such as the IDF endorsing more precise and lower-impact weapons in urban environments, subsequent conflicts in Gaza have continued to include indiscriminate violence and the killing of civilians. The destruction of the Gaza Strip has been likened to the destruction of Dresden in 1945 (Bregman 2016, 328), leading us to the next illustrative case study.

5.2 Demoralizing and Vengeful Punishment: The Firebombing of Dresden (1945)

The Allied firebombing of Dresden in 1945 was part of a larger bombing campaign, *The Combined Bombing Offensive*, in Germany by the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) and the British Royal Air Force (RAF) (Biddle 2004, 215) and this case study mainly focuses on the British perspective. The directive established at the Casablanca Conference in 1943 stated the Combined Bombing Offensive's objective: "[the] primary object will be the progressive destruction and dislocation of German military, industrial, and economic system,

and the undermining of the morale of the German people to the point where their capacity for armed resistance is fatally weakened” (Biddle 2004, 215, my brackets). This restructured strategy enlarged the scope and influence of Commander-in-Chief of the Bomber Offensive Arthur Harris (Harris 1947, 144).

Harris was given the opportunity to clarify his justification for the bombing offensive against German cities to the Air Ministry. He presented the goals of the strategy: first, to destroy German cities, kill German workers, and disrupt the functioning of German society; second, to devastate homes, infrastructure, and transportation systems, to create a grand refugee crisis, and to erode morale at the home front and the battlefield by escalating bombings. These objectives were not unintended consequences of targeting factories but deliberate aims of the bombing strategy (Overy 2005, 290). The objective is communicated to erode morale and weaken their resistance, which is interpreted to instill a sense of defeatism and decrease the will for continued resistance. Demoralizing punishment is conceptualized as the aim to instill sadness to make the adversary concede its objectives. However, as noted in this case, Harris assumes that demoralization can be achieved through instilling fear rather than sadness. This either presents a discrepancy between the strategist’s understanding³ of emotional effects on cognition and behavior or alternatively highlights that fearful sensation’s ability to ultimately culminate in a state of sadness, which is theoretically more closely related to defeatism. This finding will be discussed further in section 5.3.

The sentiment before the firebombing was partly a reaction to by the British suffering during the Blitz. Contrary to the common narrative of the “Blitz Spirit,” which presents a simplified version of reality by exaggerating British unwavering morale that could not be disrupted by attempts to demoralize them by inducing suffering (Holman 2012, 394-395, 407), this narrative often portrayed Germans as brutal, aggressive, and frenetic, while the British were characterized as friendly, patient, and calm. However, Holman’s (2012, 407) study concludes that “the bombing of German civilians was not merely acquiesced to by British civilians: it was desired and demanded.” An example of this is a journalist summary of sentiments from the

³ Alternatively, the possibility that the author Overy may have inaccurately interpreted Harris’s letters to the Air Ministry as aiming to induce fear specifically. Unfortunately, I have not been able to access these letters; nevertheless, this will be problematized further in section 5.3.

scene of the Coventry Blitz: “It is time now for our deepest, most inspired anger. The whole of Coventry cries: ‘BOMB BACK, AND BOMB HARD’” (Holman 2012, 394).

These demands of reprisals reflect a sentiment that Coventrians did not embody these calm qualities at the time, as this material reveals aggressive and vengeful sentiments. Although the Coventry Blitz occurred in 1940 (Holman 2012, 394), the calls for revenge persisted throughout the bombing campaign from 1943 to 1945 as well. The British intention to demoralize Germans through the bombing campaign not solely served to weaken them through their demoralizing punishment strategy but also aimed to satisfy civilians at home through their calls for retaliation and punishment (Lawler 2004, 119). These vengeful and aggressive sentiments exemplify how the bombing of Dresden is an example of vengeful punishment – the infliction of harm to civilians due to feelings of anger.

Indeed, after the Blitz, concern about German civilian casualties faded from British leadership as well (Overy 2005, 288), and there are numerous examples of aggressive and vengeful sentiments in the planning of the bombing campaign. To reiterate, vengeful punishment is when the strategist’s anger influences their behavior to act aggressively, resulting in inflicting harm to civilians. For instance, regarding Bomber Command's discussions on the composition of incendiaries and high explosives in their bombing efforts, Harris asserted that high explosives felt more intimidating, had a stronger impact on morale, and would kill more people. Harris’s resentment towards Germans and his will to kill them is persistent in his rhetoric. For instance, Harris used slurs for Germans when stating: “We shall have to kill a lot of Boches before we win this war” (Rumpf 1963, 98), expressing a mocking and dehumanizing tone when speaking of them. In Harris’s book, *Bomber Offensive*, he asserts that he learned from the Germans to combine incendiaries and high-explosive bombs to create an overwhelming inferno that firefighting services could not extinguish (Harris 1947, 83). The recurring reflection of how the British were treated by the Germans is consistent throughout his book, and he often asserts their ruthlessness in a spiteful tone before informing the reader of his own conduct. This demonstrates anger and bitterness over what the Germans subjected them to, serving as an example of when punishment strategies are vengeful.

The hostile tone was not solely portrayed by Harris’s personal communication but delivered through the Air Ministry as well. Leaflets dropped over Germany in the summer of 1942 issued warnings about the consequences the Germans would face if they did not remove the Hitler

regime from power and end the war. These leaflets, said to reflect statements from a radio broadcast made by Harris, illustrate the decisive and vengeful attitude that characterized the Bomber Command (Ericson Wolke 2009, 130):

We are bombing Germany, city by city, and more and more terribly, so that it will be impossible for you to continue with the war. That is our aim. We shall continue relentlessly. City by city: Lübeck, Rostock, Cologne, Emden, Bremen, Wilhelmshaven, Duisburg, Hamburg – and the list will go on and on. Let the Nazis drag you into the disaster if you want. This is for you to decide [...] We will come by day and night. No part of the Reich is safe [...] the people who work in [the factories] live near them. That is why we will hit your homes, and you (Ericson Wolke 2009, 130, authors brackets, my translation).

My interpretation of this quote is both vengeful and demoralizing, as it aims to overwhelm the German population and reduce their morale. The message is understood to instill a sense of defeatism and hopelessness: there is nothing you can do to stop us; we will continue relentlessly until you give up, which is related to sadness.

In addition to this statement, the Air Ministry justified their threats and city-bombing with a second leaflet:

Obviously we prefer to hit your factories, shipyards, and railways. It damages your Government's war machine the most. But nearly all these targets are in the midst of the houses of those of you who work in them... Therefore we hit your houses – and you – when we bomb them. We regret the necessity for this. But this regret will never stop us; you showed the world how to do it (Overy 2005, 291).

This quote is interpreted to be filled with remorse: it implies that they deserve it, no matter how horrible, because they had done it to them first. This reflects the vengeful ambitions of the British punishment strategy. A year later, the Air Ministry issued another leaflet stating that they were, in fact, not terror bombing to demoralize them with the snide comment: “We leave the terror attacks to Goering” (Overy 2005, 291). Taken together, these messages reflect a moral

superiority and bitterness over how they have been treated, which aligns with the argument that their warfare strategy is vengeful.

In conclusion, this case study illustrates how the bombing of Dresden is a case of *vengeful* and *demoralizing punishment*. The RAF's strategy is a *vengeful punishment* since the analysis highlights the aggressive and sometimes dehumanizing sentiments and rhetoric toward Germans. A cry for revenge is prominent, and I find Harris's diary especially compelling for this argument. This case illustration also identifies *demoralizing punishment*, which aimed to overwhelm the German population and induce a state of defeatism so that they would surrender. The bombing is framed as a justifiable response to the London Blitz and the hardship the British endured during the Second World War. The saying "history is written by the victors" is fitting here since the victors – The Allies – have indeed attempted to rationalize and "wash" the narrative. Despite these efforts, it is evident that there was an emotional component to the conduct of this punishment.

5.3 Discussion of Findings and Theoretical Contribution

The chapter concludes by reviewing the theoretical contribution of its application to the case studies. This discussion will address the second research question: *What new insights could this theoretical model offer to understand how different punishment strategies are carried out?*

The Punishment Typology has successfully distinguished between four different types of punishment and identified their relation to emotions. Theoretically, they are distinguishable, allowing for easier categorization. However, the cases exemplify how multiple types of punishments – and intentions – are prevalent in both cases.

The IDF's use of force in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead exemplifies the presence of both coercive and reactive strategies. Regarding the coercive strategy, the IDF aims to manipulate its adversaries' emotions through a *deterrent punishment strategy*. This is accomplished by using substantial force in Gaza to deter Hamas, Palestinians, other neighboring adversaries, and Iran by demonstrating significant strength, and is thus related to instilling *fear*. Regarding the reactive strategy, the IDF *fears* the increased political and military influence of Hamas and Israel's existential anxiety may have intensified the IDF's responses, leading to more

exaggerated behavior. To inflict harm and suffering on civilians due to fear of escalation reflects a *preemptive punishment strategy*.

The RAF's firebombing of Dresden also reflects both coercive and reactive strategies. The reactive strategy, *vengeful punishment*, is evident in the sentiments of the leadership, primarily exemplified by statements Harris and communication through the Air Ministry, but is also found in British society at large, such as the vengeful reactions to the Blitz. The intense emotions of *anger* may have exaggerated the use of excessive and overwhelming force toward the German civilian population. Furthermore, the coercive strategy, *demoralizing punishment*, aims to overwhelm the German population, leading to a sense of resignation and an emotional inclination to give up, which is related to instilling *sadness*.

Although the model separates coercive and reactive strategies, analyzing these concepts in context reveals that the decision-making in both the IDF and the RAF case was influenced by both types of strategic processes. For instance, the punishment of civilians by IDF is both a reaction to threat and an attempt to instill threat in the targeted population and the IDF's adversaries. RAF's firebombing of Dresden illustrates that they inflicted harm on the German population to instill a sense of defeatism, while that same attack also serves as an expression of anger. This indicates that both coercive and reactive strategies are identified in each case.

Regarding the IDF case, the ambition to restore deterrence capacity could be interpreted to have been influenced by their perceived existential threat. The IDF may have perceived the importance of increasing their deterrent capacity as a fundamental task to not be annihilated by their adversaries. Thus, it indicates that, in this case, the deterrent punishment, which is based on a coercive strategy, could have been guided by the emotion of fear. As mentioned in the fourth chapter detailing the theoretical development, the coercive strategy does not capture which emotion the strategist reacts to as the concept of reactive strategies does. Instead, coercive strategies require contextualization, with the IDF case serving as a good example.

In contrast, the RAF case is not intended to serve as an example of this argument. Instead, it illustrates the variety of emotional relations to punishment by illustrating how sadness and anger may relate to punishment strategies. Therefore, it shows how several emotions are relevant to punishment strategies. Applying an emotion-centric perspective to more empirical cases could unearth even more relations between emotions and punishment strategies.

Interestingly, in both cases, it is prevalent that the emotions guiding the reactive strategies - preemptive punishment by the IDF and vengeful punishment by the RAF - may be anchored in society at large to some extent. Israel's national identity is characterized by existential anxiety, which is recognized among state leaders and the Israeli population. In the firebombing of Dresden, we instead see anger characterized both in leaders and in the general population, which can influence strategists to act on that emotion. Because emotions can be shared by people, especially by those who share identity, culture, and social context, this finding supports that argument.

An interesting observation about the IDF case is that they did not only aim to instill fear in their adversaries and the Palestinian population, but they also aimed to instill fear in the Israeli population. While there are apparent similarities, such as the intention of showcasing their military capabilities, this highlights that the aim of instilling fear has different connotations depending on context. The intention to instill fear in the Israeli population communicates the protective ability (of self) rather than the destructive ability (of others). This yields an interesting observation about how the same emotion could be interpreted differently depending on the subjectivity of the person holding that feeling.

The typology also highlights the multiple intentions behind military conduct. In these cases, reactive strategies were not openly acknowledged, reinforcing the desire to present actions as rational and devoid of emotion. This rationalization allows for the endorsement of a singular narrative, despite the presence of multiple underlying intentions. This pattern is particularly evident in biographies and memoirs, where strategists, such as Harris, often discuss the emotions of others but rarely acknowledge his own. My interpretation relates to the rational-emotional dichotomy: actors strive to present themselves as rational decision-makers, unaffected by emotions, while often portraying their adversaries as overly emotional and thus irrational. This narrative construction serves to shape a favorable self-image. By analyzing these materials through an emotion-centric lens, we can better examine the sentiments underlying punishment strategies and challenge the perspectives shaped by the rational-emotional dichotomy.

Finally, the most interesting finding concerns the ambiguity of the intended emotional effects of demoralizing punishment. Previous research suggests that demoralizing strategies aim to

pressure a population into demoralization by inciting surrender, eroding trust in their government, and prompting a “demoralizing mood” (Bevan 2006, 62). Theoretically, the defeatism that characterizes demoralization should reflect sadness, resignation, and a loss of motivation. Despite this, most of the reviewed material for the RAF case mostly describes instilling fear in relation to demoralization, not sadness. However, the behavioral response of fear is not theoretically aligned with the RAF’s desired outcome of demoralization: the strategy's aim is a sense of defeatism related to sadness, but the conception of how defeatism is achieved is believed to be through fear.

The finding that strategists may be unaware of this distinction is intriguing because it creates a discrepancy between the theoretical understanding and the strategist’s knowledge of emotions’ impact on cognition and behavior when using demoralizing strategies. A logical explanation of this potential misunderstanding could be the complexity of how emotions affect each other. Instilling fear might ultimately lead to sadness. However, if the intention is to achieve defeatism, sadness is still viewed as the most related emotion, particularly given that the typology seeks to simplify reality. Alternatively, a compound effect of emotions that overwhelms the population into defeatism could also be a valuable explanation to explore further, although this would consequently deviate from the goal of simplifying through categorization.

Since the typology is mainly concerned with the intention, not the outcome, this finding does not affect the theory’s fruitfulness. Rather, it has managed to identify an interesting gap in the existing understanding of how demoralizing strategies work. Since fear is arguably the most studied emotion in coercion literature⁴, there might be inherent assumptions that this emotion is related to demoralizing punishment due to a fear-favoring bias. By suggesting that demoralizing punishment differs from deterrent punishment in its emotional relation, this new conceptualization invites the exploration of more emotional relationships to punishment rather than continuing to emphasize the prevalence of fear. My argument that this is a knowledge gap is strengthened by the fact that demoralizing strategies seldom work in accordance with the strategists’ will, entailing that there may be a lack of knowledge of how these strategies affect

⁴ In Zilincik’s (2023, 60) dissertation, he also finds that fear is the most studied emotion in strategic affairs.

the target emotionally. Regardless, this discrepancy calls for deepening our understanding of how various emotions impact each other in this context.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This thesis set out to understand how emotion relates to different types of punishment. By addressing the questions 1) *how can different types of military punishments be conceptualized from an emotion-centric perspective*, and 2) *what new insights could this theoretical model offer to understand how different punishment strategies are carried out*, the thesis has both provided a Punishment Typology that elaborates on four different types of punishments including their relation to emotions. By illustrating the typology through the two cases of the IDF strategy in the Gaza War (2008-2009) and the RAF strategy in the firebombing of Dresden (1945), the typology has provided several valuable insights that fruitfully contribute to the understanding of punishment strategies and their relation to emotions.

The thesis offers a theoretical contribution and an interdisciplinary perspective that clarifies punishment strategies by categorizing them into four types of punishment, each related to emotions. Previous scholars have conceptualized punishment as a calculative tool that can deduce populace behavior and adversary reactions. Meanwhile, this thesis challenges this conception by acknowledging that emotions guide interpretation and challenges the assumption that warfare is devoid of emotions. As evident in both case studies, both operations had emotional elements that related to the strategist's decision-making. By scrutinizing these different characteristics of punishment and how they relate to emotions, the concepts reveal how punishment is characterized differently in various contexts.

Furthermore, as the illustrative case studies highlight, civilian punishment can be motivated by a broader range of strategic objectives than traditionally theorized. Previously, punishment strategies adopted a "rational" (emotionless) assumption that pressuring civilian populations would result in subsequent pressure on the leadership to surrender or alter their strategy in the strategist's favor. However, the emotion-centric perspective highlights how the punishment of civilians is not only driven by an intent to instill certain emotions to influence the adversary's strategy but also as a reaction to emotional stimuli. This highlights the nuances and various meanings of punishment and highlights several intentions behind punishment strategies. The illustrative case studies also provide insights, such as how emotions are shared in populations, and suggest a new perspective on the emotional relation to the objective of demoralizing strategies.

6.1 Limitations and Future Research

An apparent limitation of this study, which is relevant for future research, is the accessibility of empirical material. The rationalization and emotionless approach to the strategic discourse represent a limiting factor in identifying sentiments. The tendency to avoid portraying oneself as emotional arises from a rational and emotionless bias prevalent in many societies. On top of this, since this study is concerned with military punishments of civilians, a controversial topic, it is inherently even more difficult to identify these sentiments as they are often concealed: harming civilians intentionally is seldom something to brag about. To address this, I have utilized different types of material to balance the biases. However, my recommendation for future research is to examine the relationship between non-military forms of punishment, such as economic sanctions⁵ and propaganda, and emotions. Conversely, other, less controversial types of decision-making may be suited to a more straightforward analysis.

Furthermore, I have not been able to analyze or read all the literature available regarding the cases; therefore, there may be valuable perspectives that I have overlooked. It is important to reiterate that the purpose of the illustrative case studies is exactly that: to illustrate the theory, not to test it or apply it in an extensive manner. The thesis's analysis illustrates the fruitfulness of the theory, making it a valuable contribution worth exploring and expanding further upon. Thus, I invite further refinement of the theory and further application to test its empirical fruitfulness. If the theory is applied to additional cases, we can gain different insights into how emotions relate to various types of punishment and potentially explore more types of punishment.

A natural next step for developing this framework is exploring the punishment rationality. This was not the aim of the thesis. Nonetheless, it could serve as an intriguing addition and expansion of the theory, representing a further step in challenging the rational-emotional dichotomy. There are various suggestions for how this can be achieved, such as examining whether the emotion is integral or incidental to the situation at hand (a theoretical assumption outlined in the theory chapter on [Page 15](#); see also Zilincik 2022a, 6-7). Furthermore, I find it important to acknowledge that emotional regulation plays a relevant role in moderating the intensity of

⁵ Although the case study of the Gaza War illustrates an instance of economic sanction, it was enforced through the threat of the use of force, which makes it a military punishment rather than, for example, customs regulations.

emotion, a characteristic that influences cognition and behavior, which has the potential to be expanded upon in future research.

Understanding the relationship between emotions and various types of punishment should not be misinterpreted as excusing or legitimizing the harm inflicted on civilians in conflict. Rather, it underscores the necessity of deepening our understanding of how emotions influence military decision-making and intentions during conflict. It is a fitting reminder that while emotions can influence destructive behavior, they also have the ability to inspire compassion and forgiveness. By integrating emotions with strategy, we can develop a more nuanced and realistic understanding of military strategy and decision-making. This approach offers the potential to make understanding of strategy more “human” - rooted in the complexities of emotional and political realities - by fostering insights into the meaning of strategy, which hopefully can lead to more ethical choices in conflict.

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